

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 02641 230954Z  
ACTION EA-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 2641

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: CH PINT

SUBJ: REEVALUATING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION -- "SEEK TRUTH FROM  
FACTS"

1. SUMMARY. AN AUTHORITATIVE AUGUST 23 PEOPLE'S DAILY  
ARTICLE LAYS THE GROUNDWORK FOR A FULL-SCALE DEBATE ON  
THE HISTORICAL VALIDITY OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION AS  
PART OF THE PRC'S REVOLUTIONARY HERITAGE. THE AUTHOR,  
HEILUNGKIANG CCP FIRST SECRETARY YANG I-CHEN, ATTACKS  
CADRES WHO HAVE "LINGERING FEARS" ABOUT CORRECTING THEIR  
MISTAKES AND EXAMINING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. HE  
CALLS UPON ALL TO "SEEK TRUTH FROM FACTS" AND EXPOSE  
THE GANG OF FOUR'S COVERUP OF THE BAD  
EFFECTS OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. THE PUBLICATION  
OF YANG'S ARTICLES SUGGESTS THAT TENG AND HIS SUPPORTERS  
ARE PUSHING AHEAD WITH THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN IN ORDER TO  
REEVALUATE THIS CONTROVERSIAL PERIOD AND REHABILITATE  
OTHER FALLEN CADRES. END SUMMARY.

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2. THE AUGUST 23 PEOPLE'S DAILY PRINTED AN AUTHORITATIVE  
ARTICLE ("IN ORDER TO ELIMINATE CONFUSION AND  
RESTORE ORDER, THOUGHT MUST BE LIBERATED") BY  
HEILUNGKIANG FIRST SECRETARY YANG I-CHEN. YANG IS  
JUST WINDING UP A MONTH VISIT TO THE UNITED  
STATES AND PROBABLY WROTE THE ARTICLE IN EARLY JULY.

YANG ARGUES BLUNTLY FOR "SEEKING TRUTH FROM FACTS" IN EXAMINING PAST MISTAKES AND IN DEVELOPING NEW THEORY-- A LINE IDENTIFIED WITH TENG HSIAO-PING. YANG STATES THAT ONE CANNOT TAKE MARXISM-LENINISM-MAO TSE TUNG THOUGHT AS THE "ZENITH" NOR AS ABSOLUTE TRUTH. HE TELLS HIS READERS THAT EVEN MAO WAS A FIRM BELIEVER IN "SEEKING TRUTH FROM FACTS". ACCORDING TO YANG, MAO SAID IN 1956: "IF EVERYTHING IS HANDLED ACCORDING TO EACH WORD, INCLUDING MARX'S WORDS THEN THAT CANNOT BE TOLERATED".

3. IN ADDITION, YANG STATES THAT SOME LEADING CADRES STILL HAVE "LINGERING FEARS" ABOUT CORRECTING THEIR MISTAKES. HE ALSO STATES THAT THE GANG OF FOUR WENT SO FAR AS TO PREVENT A FULL EXAMINATION OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION IN ORDER TO HIDE THEIR "CRIMES" DURING THIS PERIOD. YANG LEAVES LITTLE DOUBT THAT HE FEELS MAJOR ERRORS WERE COMMITTED DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND INTIMATES THAT THE WHOLE EPISODE SHOULD BE REEXAMINED. WHENEVER CADRES TRIED TO DISCUSS THE PERIOD IN THE PAST, YANG STATES, THE GANG OF FOUR ATTACKED THEM AS "RESTORATIONISTS." CADRES HAVE NOT DARED TO EXPOSE THE "COVERUP". HE CALLS UPON ALL TO "SEEK TRUTH FROM FACTS" AND EXPOSE LIN PIAO'S AND THE GANG OF FOUR'S MACHINATIONS DURING CONFIDENTIAL

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THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. ONLY THEN, HE STATES, WILL THOUGHT BE "LIBERATED" SO THE NATION CAN FACE

NEW HISTORICAL CONDITIONS.

4. COMMENT: THE REEXAMINATION OF EVENTS SURROUNDING LIN PIAO AND THE GANG OF FOUR HAS BEEN UNEVEN SINCE TENG RAISED THE ISSUE IN HIS JUNE 2 SPEECH TO THE ALL-ARMY POLITICAL WORK CONFERENCE. RESISTANCE APPEARS TO HAVE COME FROM THOSE WITH THE MOST TO LOSE: INDIVIDUALS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE GANG OF FOUR AND LIN PIAO IN THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND RESPONSIBLE FOR PURGING TH LARGE NUMBERS OF CADRES WHO HAVE BEEN RESTORED TO KEY POSITIONS OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS. POSTER CRITICISM IN SEVERAL AREAS, ESPECIALLY IN THE NORTHEAST, SUGGESTS THAT THE OLD ANIMOSITIES AND INCIDENTS ARE AGAIN UNDER ACTIVE DISCUSSION. TENG APPEARS TO HAVE SEIZED AN OPORTUNE MOMENT TO BRING DISCUSSION OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION OUT INTO THE OPEN. PUBLICATION OF YANG'S ARTICLE MAY HAVE BEN DELAYED UNTIL HUA KUO-FENG WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY. SOME REPORTS HAVE

SUGGESTED THAT HUA DOES NOT WISH TO HAVE THE CULTURAL  
REVOLUTION PERIOD REEXAMINED -- A MOVE WHICH WILL  
SERIOUSLY HURT MANY OF HUA'S SUPORTERS. YANG'S  
ARTICLE WILL MORE THAN LIKELY BE INTERPRETED BY MANY  
AS A SIGN OLD SCORES MUST BE SETTLED AND OTHER  
PROMINENT FIGURES PURGED DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLU-  
TION ARE ABOUT TO BE REHABILITATED.  
THOMAS

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## Message Attributes

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